

**REMARKS**

The Office Action dated February 15, 2007 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-11 are pending, claim 12 is withdrawn from consideration and amended for greater clarity. Claims 1, 7, and 8 are amended. The amendment to claims 1 and 8 is supported at page 13, line 27 through page 14 lines 12 and page 15, lines 11-27. The amendment to claim 7 corrects dependency.

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haardt et al. (US 5,180,628) (US '628) in view of Tomoaki Watanabe et al (JP2000-226561)(JP'561). Applicants traverse the rejection.

The Examiner stated that the pre-applied outer layer material for automotive interior trim, having a hotmelt applied to the back surface is taught in US '628, taking the form of a propylene polymer composite molding. The Examiner stated that this molding contains a layer of polypropylene (a), a propylene based foam layer (c), and a propylene layer (e), with hot melt adhesive between each of those layers (abstract and col. 2, lines 23-25). This polymer composite molding fails to meet the limitations of claims 2 and 10 of the present application since claims 2 and 10 recite that the outer layer material for automotive interior trim is formed solely of a surface layer material. In contrast, the US'628 polymer composite molding contains 4 layers underneath the surface layer. This failure to meet the recitation of claims 2 and 10 is not cured by the combination of US'628 with JP'561. Therefore, because the combined teachings of US'628 and JP'561 fail to teach or suggest each of the limitations of claims 2 and 10, those claims are patentable over the cited prior art.

Claims 1 and 8 recite that the hotmelt forms a layer and remains exposed on the back surface of the outer layer material so as to provide an adhesive surface after being heated. US'628 fails to teach this limitation. US'628 fails to teach that the hotmelt forms a layer that remains exposed on the back surface of the outer layer material. Both of the hotmelt layers in US'628 are intermediate layers between other layers. None of the hotmelt remains exposed so that after being heated it would provide an adhesive surface. This failure to meet the recitation of claims 1 and 8 is not cured by the teachings of JP'561. Therefore, because the combined

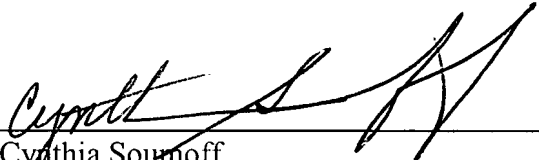
teachings of US'628 and JP'561 fail to teach or suggest each of the limitations of claims 1 and 8, those claims, and all the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the cited prior art. For this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of all the claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

As a further note, the hot-melt disclosed in JP'561 is formulated for use in "a filter being prepared by pleating a filter medium." [0010]. That disclosed hot-melt adhesive is suitable especially as a hot-melt adhesive for manufacturing a filter that has a pleated shape [0010] and is formulated in order to give a pleated shape to the filter.

In view of the foregoing arguments, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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